

WORKING PAPER

DRAFT

TOP SECRET

HANDLE VIA [REDACTED]
CONTROL SYSTEM ONLY

25X1

[REDACTED] peb
14 October 1968

NRO DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FIL

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director

SUBJECT : Impact of [REDACTED] 25X1

NRO

1. As you may recall, [REDACTED] 25X1

and the [REDACTED] Report both commented on the possible need to apply

NRO 25X1

[REDACTED] The possible utility of such a capability was brought

forceably to our attention again in connection with the [REDACTED] NRO 25X1

this year. Partly as a result of the concern aroused by the NIE

and the [REDACTED] Report, COMIREX undertook an exhaustive study of

the problem during 1967. Early this year they submitted a report

to USIB which [REDACTED] providing 25X1

a limited number of [REDACTED] would NRO 25X1

appear to be within the state of the art and which would make a

substantial contribution in the field of [REDACTED] NRO 25X1

[REDACTED] One of the most important findings of the COMIREX report,

however, was that [REDACTED] of this type could also NRO 25X1

make a major contribution to the intelligence community's other

[REDACTED] needs while performing its [REDACTED] and without NRO 25X1

detracting from its capability to do [REDACTED] job. NRO 25X1

TOP SECRET

HANDLE VIA [REDACTED]

25X1

2. The COMIREX report was forwarded by USIB to the Director, NRO, with a request that the NRO study the problem and report back to USIB concerning the feasibility of creating such a capability and assessing the cost and time factors involved. Since that time the NRO staff has engaged in an exhaustive study of the problem, but [REDACTED] has postponed his formal reply to USIB on several occasions.

3. Recently the [REDACTED] Panel of the President's Science Advisory Committee asked for a briefing on the subject of [REDACTED]. The COMIREX staff briefed the Panel concerning the status of our requirements and [REDACTED] staff briefed concerning the state of the art in related technical fields and the feasibility of creating such a system. In the course of preparing these briefings, the NRO staff ^{has now} passed an informal copy of the draft study prepared in reply to USIB to the COMIREX staff for their background information. On the basis of the information contained in the draft and in the various briefings presented to the [REDACTED] Panel as reported to me, I would assess the situation as follows:

a. There would appear to be considerable benefit to the intelligence community if we could have [REDACTED] reconnaissance satellite system. Such a system might well become the principal means of satisfying our needs for

[REDACTED] and might permit a drastic reduction in other [REDACTED] systems. It would provide

us with opportunities to apply [REDACTED] to important substantive problems in a way that we have never been able to do in the past.

25X1

NRO 25X1

b. It appears to be entirely feasible to have a [REDACTED] in being within the next few years -- say three to five.

c. There are a number of feasible technical alternatives for providing [REDACTED] which are under study. Any one of several of these might be chosen almost immediately, but the [REDACTED] Panel appears to favor a period of intensive research along several of the more promising lines before a final selection of the [REDACTED] would be made.

25X1

25X1

d. [REDACTED] has said that his main reason for delaying his reply to USIB has been his wish to present his personal views concerning the uncertainties of both cost and timing in a complex endeavor of this type. He is apparently anxious that USIB understand that up to a certain point, speed can be purchased at the cost of the expenditure of much greater sums than would otherwise be necessary.

4. My own view of this matter is that we do not need to

NRO 25X1

engage in a crash program [REDACTED] but that it would make a great deal of sense for us to proceed on the

assumption that there will be a period of about a year of intensified research followed by a two- to four-year development period which would culminate at some point about [REDACTED] in giving us a rather remarkable [REDACTED] capability.

5. I am bringing this matter to your attention at this time for two reasons. First, the impact of [REDACTED] on the intelligence community is bound to be tremendous in terms of organization, ^{procedure} work habits, equipment, and, perhaps, in the need for substantial reallocations of personnel. [The impact may be so great that I feel that it is necessary for us to begin without delay to study the problems that we will face and to begin the financial and personnel planning required. The second reason for considering this matter without delay is that our findings concerning the organization and intelligence procedures [that we may wish to adopt] could in turn have an important impact on technical decisions that will be facing the NRO within the next year or two. It is necessary, therefore, for us to proceed without delay if our findings are to have the proper impact on these ^{influenced} technical decisions *bearing on our operations*

6. Specifically, I propose that you establish a task force representing all elements of the Agency concerned to study this problem. It would appear desirable to have the task force prepare its own terms of reference and submit them to us for approval at the end

of thirty days, with progress reports to be submitted at 90-day intervals thereafter. In my view, the task force should include at least representatives of the DD/I, DD/S&T, NPIC, and CIA personnel on the COMIREX staff. It might be desirable to have somebody from O/PPB head the task force but I suggest that you and I consult on this matter before a final decision is made.

7. We might also think of the task force as drawing up a CIA position to be tabled with COMIREX at an appropriate future date. Final planning on this matter will have to be done on a community-wide basis, but it would be useful to have an Agency view of the general direction in which we should go before raising it officially in COMIREX.

EDWARD W. PROCTOR
Acting DD/I